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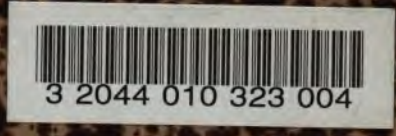

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FROM

J. Brock,
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3 Jan. 1887.

WASHINGTON:

HIS PERSON AS REPRESENTED BY THE ARTISTS.

The Houdon Statue, Its History and Value.

"*A fac-simile of Washington's Person.*"

LAFAYETTE.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SENATE OF VIRGINIA.

R. F. WALKER:
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC PRINTING.
1873.

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"*Resolved*, That the history of the Houdon Statue, written by Col. Sherwin McRae, be printed for the use of the Legislature, and that the same be issued with the public documents, and five hundred additional copies be printed for distribution among the members of the Senate."

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE OF VIRGINIA, March 31st, 1873.

SENATE DOC. NO. XXI.

History and Value of the Houdon Statue.

By SHERWIN McRAE, Esq.

Houdon's Statue of Washington is interesting to mankind as the most perfect representation of this peerless man that exists. While it is the cherished object of pride and affection with our whole country, Virginia remembers that before time and opportunity had fully developed the civic virtues of Washington, she acknowledged him the chief of her sons, and sealed the acknowledgment with this matchless statue.

The General Assembly of Virginia, soon after the declaration of peace, responding to the emotions of affection and gratitude which stirred the hearts of her people, decreed a statue to General Washington, and Houdon of Paris, one of the most celebrated statuaries of the time (*a*,) was employed to make it. To insure a perfect likeness, Houdon visited Mount Vernon, and remained with Washington a fortnight, during which time he took a cast of his face, head and upper part of the body, and minute measurements of his person, and acquired that intimate knowledge of his subject which his mission demanded (*b*). The artist was to receive as compensation for the statue twenty-five thousand livres, or one thousand English guineas; and his expenses incurred in the trip, to and from Virginia, were to be reimbursed him. In addition, his life was to be insured during the time of his absence from France.

The artist sailed from France about the first of August, 1785, arriving at Mount Vernon the third of October ensuing, and returned to Paris about the first of January, 1786. The contract allowed him three years for the completion of the statue, which he effected in about that space of time, completing it in 1788. But the new Capitol in which provision was to be made for its reception not being finished before 1796, it was detained in France to await that event (*c*.) It reached Philadelphia in April, 1796, arrived in Richmond in May, and was erected in the quadrangle of the Capitol, the 14th day of May, (*d*) 1796. In September, 1872, on account of the insecurity of the floor, on which it stood, it was taken down and removed to a place of security. But the General Assembly at their present session (1872--73) have provided for its replacement.

The statue presents the figure erect (*e*); the head uncovered; the sword on the left, the cane in the right hand—representing in device what Washington had so forcibly expressed in his reply to the address of the General Assembly of Virginia, the subordination of the military to the civil power; the fasces and ploughshare by his side, the one representing authority, power and honor—the other, the peaceful arts most congenial to his taste and feelings. The beautiful harmony between these simple devices and the character of Washington inspires the spectator with the most pleasing emotions.

The dress which he wore in the service of his country displays the proportions of his figure with an exactness which antiquity, embarrassed by drapery and the toga, could only attain in nudity. The posture is true to nature, yet revealing a grace which

art cannot equal. The expression is that of dignity and repose. Washington stands revealed before us as in life, the marvel and the admiration of the world, and the cherished object of the affection of his native State.

No statue or painting exists which is more thoroughly authenticated than the Houdon Statue. From its inception to its completion it is historically marked by a chronological record of facts, resolutions, correspondence and inscriptions which will preserve its identity and character through all time; and what is most rare, its perfect similitude to the original is established by facts and opinions as convincing as human testimony can furnish.

On the 15th day of May, 1784, a committee of the House of Delegates, consisting of Messrs. Ronald, Mann Page, Hubard, Madison, Henry, Tazewell, Heath, Roane, Taylor of Caroline, Cary and Corbin, were appointed to draw up an address to General Washington, expressive of the thanks and gratitude of that body for his unremitted zeal and services in the cause of liberty—congratulating him on his return to his native country, and the exalted pleasures of domestic life; and the same committee was instructed to consider and report "What further measures may be necessary for perpetuating the gratitude and veneration of his country to General Washington." On the 5th day of June, 1784, Mr. Ronald, in behalf of the committee, reported an address and resolution, which were referred to the committee of the whole house; and on the 22nd of June, the House of Delegates, and on the 26th of June, the Senate adopted the following address and resolution, which had been reported by the joint committee of the two houses:

"The representatives of this Commonwealth would be unfaithful to the sentiments of their constituents, as well as do violence to their own, did they omit this occasion of congratulating you on the final establishment of peace, which has taken place since their last meeting, and on the opportunity which this event has given for your return to the felicities of private life. We shall ever remember, sir, with gratitude and affection the patriotic exchange which you made of these felicities for the severe task of conducting the armies of your country through a conflict with one of the most powerful nations of the earth. We shall ever remember, with admiration, the wisdom which marked your councils on this arduous occasion; the firmness and dignity which no trials of adverse fortune could shake, the moderation and equanimity which no scenes of triumph could disturb. Nor shall we ever forget the exemplary respect which in every instance you have shown to the rights of civil authority, or the exalted virtue which on many occasions led you to commit to danger your fame itself, rather than hazard for a moment the true interests of your country. In reviewing these merits we feel every impression which they are calculated to make on grateful and affectionate minds, and we fervently pray that they may be rewarded with every blessing of which this life will admit, and with complete happiness in that which is to come."

To this address presented at Mount Vernon by the joint committee of the two houses, appointed for the purpose (*f*), General Washington, on the 15th day of July, made the following reply:

"*Gentlemen.*—With feelings which are more easy to be conceived than expressed, I meet and reciprocate the congratulations of the representatives of this Commonwealth, on the final establishment of peace. Nothing can add more to the pleasure which arises from a conscientious discharge of public trust than the approbation of one's country. To have been so happy under a vicissitude of fortune, amidst the difficult and trying scenes of an arduous conflict, as to meet this, is, in my mind, to have attained the highest honor; and the consideration of it in my present peaceful

retirement, will heighten all my domestic joys and constitute my greatest felicity. I should have been truly wanting in duty, and must have frustrated the great and important object for which we resorted to arms, if seduced by a temporary regard for fame I had suffered the paltry love of it to interfere with my country's welfare, the interest of which was the only inducement which carried me into the field, or permitted the sacred rights of civil authority (though but for a moment), to be violated and infringed by a power meant originally to rescue and confirm them.

"For those rewards and blessings which you have invoked for me in this world, and for the fruition of that happiness which you pray for in that which is to come, you have, gentlemen, all my thanks and all my gratitude. I wish I could ensure them to you and the State you represent a hundred fold."

The following is the resolution of the General Assembly. "That the Executive be requested to take measures for procuring a statue of General Washington, to be of the finest marble and best workmanship, with the following inscription on its pedestal, viz:

"The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia have caused this statue to be erected as a monument of affection and gratitude to George Washington, who, uniting to the endowments of the hero, the virtues of the patriot, and exerting both in establishing the liberties of his country, has rendered his name dear to his fellow-citizens, and given to the world an immortal example of true glory."

To fulfill the duty imposed by this resolution, Governor Harrison, on the first day of July, 1784, addressed the following letter to Charles Wilson Peale, of Philadelphia: "The Assembly of this State have voted a statue of our late most worthy commander-in-chief General Washington, and that I may be enabled to discharge the pleasing trust reposed in me, in the most perfect manner possible, I have to request the favor of you to draw a full length picture of him immediately, and as soon as it is sufficiently dry, to have it packed up in the most secure manner, and shipped in the first ship bound for France, to the address of the Hon. Thomas Jefferson:" and on the 20th of July, 1784, writes to Mr. Jefferson as follows:

"The Assembly of this State have voted a statue of our late worthy commander-in-chief, General Washington, and have directed their intentions to be carried into effect by the Executive—for particulars I refer you to the enclosed resolution. You will observe they have only provided for one side of the pedestal, and that the others, with the dress, &c., are left for the exercise of the genius of the Executive. This would be a very pleasing employment for us, if we had ever turned our thoughts that way, or were adepts in the science of devices, emblems, &c.; but as we are not, we have unanimously fixed on you and my friend Dr. Franklin, who we all know are competent to the task. I therefore most earnestly request the favor of you to undertake it.

"The history of the war, and the share he has had in it, are so well known to you both, that nothing on that subject is necessary from me; you are therefore left entirely at large, and have the whole direction of the business committed to you. I shall write to the Doctor in full confidence that it will give him pleasure to assist you.

"To enable the artist to finish his work in the most perfect manner, I have ordered Mr. Peale to send to your address a full length picture of the General as soon as possible

"The intention of the Assembly is, that the statue should be the work of the most masterly hand. I shall therefore leave it to you to find out the best in any of the European States. To defray the expense certain funds are appropriated that will undoubt-

edly produce the money, and it shall be remitted to you long before the work can be completed. I can form no judgment what sum it will take, but by the cost of Lord Botetourt's statue, which I think was about nine hundred and fifty pounds sterling to the artist, and for shipping charges. There was a further sum to the person who came over to set it up; but that in the present case will be the consideration of a future day, there being no place as yet fixed on to place it in. You will be so obliging as soon as you have fixed on the devices, and agreed for the statue, to favor me with the particulars of the former, and a copy of your agreement, that there may be no deficiency in the remittances, either in point of time or quantity. I shall make no apology for the trouble the execution of this trust will bring on you, from a thorough conviction that the love and attachment you have for the worthy person whose memory the statue is to perpetuate, will render it rather a pleasing than a disagreeable employment."

Nov. 12th, 1784, Governor Harrison informs Mr. Jefferson, then in Paris, that the full length picture of General Washington, by Charles Wilson Peale of Philadelphia, is finished, and will be shipped to his address by the first vessel bound for France.

Nov. 20th, Governor Harrison thanks Mr. Peale for the readiness with which he furnished the picture of General Washington, and forwarded it to France.

June 16th, 1785, Mr. Jefferson to the Governor of Virginia writes:

"In a letter of January 12th, to Governor Harrison, I informed him of the necessity that the statuary should see General Washington. M. Houdon will, therefore, go over with Dr. Franklin some time in the next month." And in a letter to Mr. Adams, dated July 7th, 1785, he writes: "Monsieur Houdon has agreed to go to America to take the figure of General Washington." Mr. Jefferson then requests Mr. Adams to ascertain what it will cost in London to ensure twenty thousand livres on Houdon's life, that he believes him to be healthy enough; between thirty and thirty-five years of age; and will be absent about six months.

All needful arrangements having been made for Houdon's trip to America, Mr. Jefferson writes to General Washington as follows:

"Paris, July 10th, 1785, M. Houdon would much sooner have had the honor of attending you but for a spell of sickness which long induced us to despair of his recovery, and from which he is but recently recovered. He comes now for the purpose of lending the aid of his art to transmit you to posterity. He is without rivalship in it, being employed in all parts of Europe in whatever is capital. He has had a difficulty to withdraw himself from an order of the Empress of Russia, a difficulty, however, that arose from a desire to show her respect, but which never gave him a moment's hesitation about the voyage, which he considers as promising the brightest chapter of his history.

"I have spoken of him as an artist only, but I can assure you also, that as a man, he is disinterested, generous, candid and panting after glory; in every circumstance meriting your good opinion. He will have need to see you much, while he shall have the honor of being with you, which you can the more freely admit, as his eminence and merit give him admission into genteel societies here."

Paris, July, 11th, 1785, Mr. Jefferson to the Governor of Virginia writes as follows: "M. Houdon's long and desperate illness has retarted his departure for Virginia. We had hoped from our first conversations with him that it would be easy to make our terms, and that the cost of the statue and expense of sending him would be about a thousand guineas. But when we came to settle this precisely, he thought himself obliged to ask vastly more, insomuch that at one moment we

thought our treaty at an end. But unwilling to commit such a work to an inferior hand, we made him an ultimate proposition on our part. He was as much mortified at the prospect of not being the executor of such a work, as we were not to have it done by such a hand. He therefore acceded to our terms, though we are satisfied he will be a considerable loser. We were led to insist on them because in a former letter to the Governor I had given the hope we entertained of bringing the whole within one thousand guineas. The terms are twenty-five thousand livres, or one thousand English gnineas for the statue and pedestal. Besides this we pay his expenses going and returning, which we expect will be between four and five thousand livres; and if he dies on the voyage we pay his family ten thousand livres. This latter proposition was disagreeable to us; but he has a father, mother and sisters who have no resource but in his labours, and he himself is one of the best of men in the world. He therefore made it a *sine qua non*, without which all would have been off. We have reconciled it to ourselves, by determining to get insurance on his life made in London, which we expect can be done for five per cent., so that it becomes an additional sum of five hundred livres. I enclose you for a more particular detail a copy of the agreement. Dr. Franklin was disposed to give two hundred and fifty guineas more, which would have split the difference between the actual terms and Mr. Houdon's demand.

"I wish the State at the conclusion of his work may agree to give him this much more, because I am persuaded he will be a loser, which I am sure their generosity would not wish."

Paris, July 12th, 1785. Mr. Jefferson writes to the Virginia Delegates in Congress as follows: "In consequence of the orders of the Legislative and Executive bodies of Virginia, I have engaged Monsieur Houdon to make the statue of General Washington. For this purpose it is necessary for him to see the General. He therefore goes with Dr. Franklin, and will have the honor of delivering you this himself. As the journey is at the expense of the State, according to our contract, I will pray you to favor him with your patronage and counsels, and to protect him as much as possible from those impositions to which strangers are but too much exposed. I have advised him to proceed in the stages to the General's. I have also agreed if he could see Generals Greene and Gates, whose busts he has a desire to execute, that he may make a moderate deviation for this purpose, after he has done with General Washington. But the most important object with him is to be employed to make General Washington's equestrian statue for Congress (*g*). Nothing but the expectations of this could have engaged him to have undertaken this voyage, as the pedestrian statue for Virginia will not make it worth the business he loses by absenting himself. I was therefore obliged to assure him of my recommendations for this greater work. Having acted in this for the State, you will, I hope, think yourselves in some measure bound to patronize and urge his being employed by Congress. I would not have done this myself, nor asked you to do it, did I not see that it would be better for Congress to put this business into his hands than into those of any other person living, for these reasons: 1st, He is without rivalship, the first statuary of this age; as a proof of which he receives orders from every other country for things intended to be capital; 2nd, He will have seen General Washington, have taken his measure in every part, and of course whatever he does of him will have the merit of being original, from which other workmen can only furnish copies; 3rd, He is in possession of the house, the furnaces and all other apparatus provided for making the statue of Louis XV. If any other workmen be em-

ployed, this will all have to be provided anew, and of course to be added to the price of the statue; for no man can ever expect to make two equestrian statues. The addition which this would be to the price will much exceed the expectation of any person who has not seen that apparatus. In truth, it is immense.

"As to the price of the work, it will be much greater than Congress is probably aware of. I have enquired somewhat into this circumstance, and find the prices of those made for two centuries past have been from one hundred and twenty thousand guineas, down to sixteen thousand guineas, according to the size; and as far as I have seen, the smaller they are, the more agreeable; the smallest yet made is infinitely above the size of life, and they all appear *outré* and monstrous. That of Louis XV is probably the best in the world, and it is the smallest here, yet it is impossible to find a point of view from which it does not appear a monster, unless you go so far as to lose sight of the features and finer lineaments of the face and body. A statue is not made like a mountain, to be seen at a great distance. To perceive those minuter circumstances which constitute its beauty, you must be near it, and in that case it should be so little above the size of life, as to appear actually of that size from your point of view. I should not, therefore, fear to propose that the one intended by Congress should be considerably smaller than any of those to be seen here, as I think it will be more beautiful, and also cheaper. The pedestrian statue of marble is to take three years. The equestrian of course would take much more."

General Washington at Mount Vernon September 26th, 1785, writes to Benjamin Franklin as follows:"

"When it suits M. Houdon to come hither, I will accommodate him in the best manner I am able, and shall endeavor to render his stay as agreeable as I can."

On the same day General Washington writes to M. Houdon: "By a letter which I have lately had the honor to receive from Dr. Franklin at Philadelphia, I am informed of your arrival at that place Many letters from very respectable characters in France as well as the Doctor's inform me of the occasion, for which, though the cause is not of my seeking, I feel the most agreeable and grateful sensations. I wish the object of your mission had been more worthy of the masterly genius of the first statuary in Europe, for this you are represented to me. It will give me pleasure, sir, to welcome you to this seat of my retirement, and whatever I have or can procure that is necessary to your purposes, or convenient and agreeable to your wishes, you must freely command, as inclination to oblige you will be among the last things in which I shall be found deficient, either on your arrival or during your stay."

And on the same day from the same place he writes to Mr. Jefferson as follows:

"I had the honor to receive your favours of the 10th and 17th of July, which were committed to the care of M. Houdon, but I have not yet had the pleasure to see that gentleman. His instruments and materials, Dr. Franklin informs me, were sent down the Seine; but not being arrived when the ship left Havre, he was obliged to leave them, and is now busied in supplying himself with others at Phildelphia, with which, when done, he will come to this place. I shall take great pleasure in showing M. Houdon every civility and attention in my power, during his stay in this country; for I feel myself under personal obligations to you and Dr. Franklin, as the State of Virginia has done me the honor to direct a statue to be erected to my memory, for having placed the execution in the hands of so eminent an artist, and so worthy a character."

General Washington, in a letter to the Marquis De La Rouerie, dated Mount Vernon, Oct. 7th, 1785, informs the Marquis that M. Houdon arrived at Mount Vernon the 3rd day of October, (four days preceding the date of his letter.)

General Washington, in a letter to the Marquis De La Fayette, dated Mount Vernon, November the 8th, 1785, writes: "I have now to thank you for your favours of the 9th and 14th of July, the first by M. Houdon, who stayed no more than a fortnight with me, and to whom, for his trouble and risk in crossing the seas, although I had no agency in the business, I feel myself under personal obligations."

Mr. Jefferson, in his letter to General Washington, dated Paris, January 4th, 1786, writes: "I have been honored with your letter of September the 26th, which was delivered me by M. Houdon, who is safely returned.

"He has brought with him the mould of the face only, having left the other parts of his work with his workmen, to come by some other conveyance. Dr. Franklin, who was joined with me in the superintendence of this just monument, having left us before what is called the costume of the statue was decided on, I cannot so well satisfy myself, and am persuaded should not so well satisfy the world as by consulting your own wish or inclination as to this article.

"Permit me, therefore, to ask you whether there is any particular dress or any particular attitude which you would rather wish to be adopted. I shall take a singular pleasure in having your own idea executed, if you will be so good as to make it known to me."

Gen. Washington writes to Mr. Jefferson from Mount Vernon, August the 1st, 1786, as follows:

"The letters you did me the favor to write to me, on the 4th and 7th of January, have been duly received. In answer to your obliging enquires respecting the dress and attitude which I would wish to have given to the statue in question, I have only to observe, that not having sufficient knowledge in the art of sculpture to oppose my judgment to the taste of connoisseurs, I do not desire to dictate in the matter. On the contrary, I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever may be judged decent and proper. I should even scarcely have ventured to suggest, that, perhaps, a servile adherence to the garb of antiquity might not be altogether so expedient, as some little deviation in favour of the modern costume, if I had not learnt from Col. Humphreys that this was a circumstance hinted in conversation by Mr. West to M. Houdon.

"This taste which has been introduced in painting by West, I understand is received with applause and prevails extensively."

Mr. Jefferson, in his letter to Mr. Madison dated at Paris, February 8th, 1786, writes: "Houdon has returned. He called on me the other day to remonstrate against the inscription proposed for General Washington's statue. He says it is too long to be put on the pedestal. I told him I was not at liberty to permit any alteration; but I would represent his objection to a friend who could judge of its validity, and whether a change could be authorized. This has been the subject of conversation here, and various devices and inscriptions have been suggested. The one which has appeared best to me may be translated as follows:

"Behold, reader, the form of George Washington. For his worth ask history. That will tell it when this stone shall have yielded to the decay of time. His country erects this monument. Houdon makes it." This for one side. On the second, represent the evacuation of Boston, with the motto, *Hostibus primum fugatis.* On the third, the capture of the Hessians, with *Hostibus iterum devictis.* On the fourth, the surrender of York, with *Hostibus ultimum debellatis.* The artist made the same objection of length to the inscription for the bust of Lafayette. I am not certain it is desirable in either case."

To this letter Mr. Madison replied, with his characteristic modesty, that his own inscription was inferior to the substitute copied into the letter of Mr. Jefferson, but was apprehensive, notwithstanding that no change could be effected, and in conclusion says, "the devices for the other side of the pedestal are well chosen, and might, I should suppose, be applied without scruple, as decorations of the artist. I counted my self on the addition of proper ornaments, and am persuaded that such a liberty could give offense nowhere." On the reception of this reply, all purpose of changing the inscription was abandoned, and the devices appended to the statue adopted, which like the inscription are so felicitious and appropriate, as to be equally beyond the sphere of praise or criticism. That the remonstrance of Houdon was founded on the relation between the height of the pedestal, and the length of the inscription, and the laws of perspective in regard to which the artist wished to bring the statue nearer the level of the spectator, than the inscription would permit (*h*), and had no relation to mere literary excellence there can be no doubt. Mr. Rives, in his Life and Times of Madison, comments on the proposed substitute with caustic severity, evidently referring it to rivalry for literary excellence, instead of the true reasons which prompted the remonstrance of the artist.

Paris, August 14th, 1787, Mr. Jefferson writes to General Washington:

"I was happy to find, by the letter of August the 1st, 1786, which you did me the honor to write to me, that the modern dress for your statue would meet your approbation. I found it strongly the sentiment of West, Copely, Trumbull and Brown in London, after which it would be ridiculous to add that it was my own. I think a modern in an antique dress as just an object of ridicule as a Hercules or Marius with a periwig and chapeau-bras." The coincidence of taste between General Washington and Mr. Jefferson, considering the high culture of Mr. Jefferson in all that pertained to the fine arts, will contribute to justify the opinion that while the adoption of the modern costume is necessary to truthful delineation, art and taste approve the choice.

1795, Feb. 6th, Governor Brooke, to Mr. Monroe, at Paris, after reminding Mr. Monroe of the appointment of Mr. Jefferson (then at Paris), to procure a statue of General Washington, and his leaving that city before its completion, writes: "But as it was not finished at the time he left Paris, and we have had no information since with respect to its progress, or any estimate of the ultimate expense, we are unable to determine what is still incumbent upon us, to carry into effect the object of the Legislature. Permit me therefore to request that you will be so obliging as to make such enquiry as will trace this business to its present stage, and communicate such information respecting it as will enable the Executive both to complete Mr. Jefferson's contract, and attain the object of it."

Paris, August 20th, 1795, Mr. Monroe writes: "I have lately received your letter of the 6th of February, respecting the statue of General Washington. * * *

"The delay of your letter on the passage is the cause that an earlier answer was not given to it. I give one at present, merely for the purpose of assuring you that I will with great pleasure make the enquiries suggested, and in other respects perform everything you have requested, and advise you afterwards of the result, as soon as possible.

* * * * * *

Paris, July 29th, 1796, Mr. Monroe to the Governor of Virginia, writes: "I hope the statue of the President arrived safe and without injury at Richmond, and in which I confide, as it was packed up with great care here and forwarded from Havre under the auspices of a prudent captain of one of our best vessels.

"I herewith enclose you a note of the amount of what I paid to M. Houdon, the artist, for the charges annexed, and which he requested immediately. This item will be adjusted with Mr. Jones when he desires it. M. Houdon has also another demand of about the like sum for depreciation, and which I promised to cummunicate to you, and pay him in case you permitted. I believe from his statement, that he actually lost that amount, and in that mode, but, at the same time I also believe, that the State of Virginia did not profit thereby, as likewise that the only claim he has, if any, is upon the candor and liberality of the State. * * * *

August 12th, 1803, London, Mr. Monroe, to Governor of Virginia, encloses claim of Houdon on the State of Virginia. which had been examined and stated by Mr. Skipwith American Consul, at Paris, who reported 2,800 livres due to Houdon, on account of the depreciation of the paper in which the last payment (9,000 livres), for the statue of Washington was paid.

1851, March 21st, In view of the liability to injury and destruction of the statue of Washington, the General Assembly of Virginia provided for taking casts of the statue for the colleges of the State.

1853, January 14th, Wm. J. Hubard of Richmond, by joint resolution of the General Assembly, was authorized to take casts of Houdon's Statue of Washington, with exclusive right for seven years. subject to certain limitations.

1856, March 8th, The Governor was authorized by the General Assembly to purchase from Mr. Hubard a bronze cast of Houdon's Statue of Washington, to be placed in the Military Institute at Lexington. In pursuance of this authority the statue was purchased by Governor Wise, and erected at Lexington with appropriate honors, including an eloquent oration by his Excellency, replete with historical facts and incidents, pertaining to the Houdon Statue. A copy of this oration although diligently sought, the writer has not been able to obtain.

On the first day of April, 1873, the General Assembly of Virginia, by joint resolution, directed the statue of Washington to be restored to its former place in the Capitol, and appropriated one thousand dollars to defray the expense in giving that stability to the floor necessary to the safety of the statue.

No act which Virginia has ever performed is more creditable to her than the decreeing of this noble statue.

The Assembly which decreed it consisted in large part of men eminent for talents, wisdom and virtue.

The committee was one of unusual ability, every one of whom was a man of mark, fortunately Mr. Madison was one of the number, and to his masterly pen we owe the inscription on the pedestal, which is so appropriate and felicitous that it will ever associate his name with the immortal subject.

To what member of the committee we owe the chaste and beautiful address reported by Mr. Ronald as chairman of the committee, we are not informed; and while Mr. Ronald and others of the committee might have been equal to the task of its composition, some will be disposed to refer it to Mr. Madison.

The character of Washington was already the grandest which history had recorded, and unlike others grandest when drawn by the pencil of truth. A representation of his person in correspondence with this character required an imitation of nature with absolute exactness.

Mr. Jefferson, with that intuitive penetration which distinguished him in the fine arts, as well as in science and government, perceived that nothing but the cast of the face and minute measurements of the person could ensure that perfect likeness of the original which his country and the world desired. The artist was equally impressed

with the importance of an exact likeness and the only mode of accomplishing it. A Washington ideal in person would have been as unsatisfactory as a Washington ideal in character; and but for this effigy from life, the world would be divided as to the best resemblance: (*i*) and in despair and uncertainty, affection and art would vie with each other in ideal delineations of that illustrious man. A distinguished writer says: "As in contemplating the portrait of an eminent person, we long to be instructed in his history, so in considtering his actions, we are anxious to behold his countenance. So earnest is this desire, that the imagination is generally ready to coin a set of features, or conceive a character, to supply the painful absence of one or the other." If Washington stands out on the list of fame as the greatest of all names, then his exact likeness must be an object of the deepest interest not only to the people of the United States, but to the world. In view of this yearning wish (fortunately for its attainment), those best acquainted with Washington have pronounced his statue by Houdon the best representation of his person which exists. But in the appendix to the fifth volume of Irving's Life of Washington, a communication ascribed to Mr. H. T. Tuckerman contains the following language: "But that implicit fidelity now evident in the busts of our leading sculptors, was not then in vogue, and the artists of the day were rather adepts in idealizing than in precise imitation of nature. Therefore the result of Houdon's labours, though in general satisfactory, cannot be used with the mathematical exactitude as a guide which greater attention to minutiæ would have secured."

An opinion so remarkable in one of the most distinguished of the biographers of Washington can only be accounted for on the supposition that the writer was but partially acquainted with the history of the Houdon statue, a history which as already unfolded proves that "implicit fidelty" and precise imitation of nature with mathematical exactitude were demanded of the artist, and realized; and that, although he might be an adept in idealizing as in his Diana and Cicero, he was equally an adept in copying nature in all its minutiæ, with absolute exactness. No other representation of the person of Washington is distinguished by one tithe of the evidence of the minutiæ necessary to exactness, as that of the Houdon statue. Houdon's visit to Mount Vernon, his cast of the face, head, and upper part of the body, and minute measurements of the person with mathematical exactness; Jefferson's letter to Governor Harrison, informing him, that it was necessary that the statuary should see General Washington, although he had a full length portrait by Peale, (*j*) painted for his guidance; Jefferson's letter to General Washington, saying the artist would have to see him much; his letter to the Virginia delegates in Congress, urging the employment of Houdon to execute the equestrian statue of Washington ordered by Congress; first because "he was the first statuary of the age;" and second, because "he will have seen General Washington, and have taken his measure in every part;" that what Houdon did would be "original" from which other workmen could only "furnish copies."—these facts lead to the irresistible conclusion, that Houdon, Mr. Jefferson, Dr. Franklin, Governor Harrison, and all who were engaged in the matter of the statue, regarded an exact likeness of Washington as the grand desideratum, and that the measures adopted by Houdon, and none other, could secure such a result. (*k*) Had their purpose been otherwise, the character of Washington would have rebuked them. The man who was averse to a separate biography, and preferred that the history of his life should be deduced from the history of his country, lest partiality might praise where

truth would rebuke, and preferred for the costume of his statue the dress which he really and daily wore to the classic folds and drapery of antiquity, yet more required that the delineation of his person should be true to nature. (*l*) As unmerited praise and fictitious virtues for the most part make up the characters of the great, so the creative and ideal fill out and fashion their effigies; truth alone can adequately protray the character and person of Washington. No portrait of Washington can be satisfactory about which there is a reasonable doubt as to its similitude. The more beautiful and artistic the less satisfactory, if it professes a resemblance which it does not possess. On the other hand, the true likeness of Washington is of such inestimable value, that the world is its guardian, and the muniments of its title one of the most sacred of the trusts committed to history. History and art have set their seals to the record, that this statue is the most perfect similitude of Washington which has ever been made; and medallic art in its peculiar relations has stamped it with indelible and authoritative marks as the only exact similitude of the great original. (*m*)

On the occasion of inaugurating the Washington Cabinet of Medals, in the city of Washington on the 22nd day of February, 1860, all the paintings, statues, busts, medals and coins bearing representations of Washington were considered—the medals and coins alone comprising one hundred and thirty-eight specimens, and the commemorative medal modeled from the Houdon bust was, after the most careful investigation and comparison, adopted as the standard likeness. During the proceedings on that interesting occasion, Mr. Longacre, a distinguished artist, and an adept in critical distinctions in this department of the fine arts, being called on proceeded to say: "Viewing the close connection that necessarily exists between the medal portrait and the sculptured bust, belonging as it were to the same department of art, the bust, very frequently furnishiug the only reliable and material authority from which the medalist can proceed with his work, the fidelity of the sculptured head or bust becomes a question of the first importance in determining the value of a likeness on the medal. Respecting the authenticated portraits of Washington in sculpture, I am aware that in a communication which appears in Irving's Life of Washington, already esteemed as a work of the highest reliability, a preference is distinctly indicated for the bust executed by Caracchi, but although I am not insensible to the beauty of this bust as a work of art, yet as a faithful transmission of the features of Washington, it cannot, in my view, be permitted to take precedence of the head by Houdon, to which on the score of fidelity, I must give the preference over any other extant." He then proceeds to relate the following interesting interview between Mr. Stuart and himself, occurring in the year, 1825, relating to the original head of Washington painted from life, and which was then before him on the canvass, and which had always been retained by Mr. Stuart. In the course of the conversation, Mr. Stuart, said, "He came to this country for the purpose of painting Washington. He turned to Mr. Longacre, remarking, 'you are acquainted with Houdon's bust I presume?' Mr. Longacre replied that he was, and that it was the head par excellence, that he had always preferred as his ideal of the Great Original. "You are right, said Mr. Stuart, Houdon took a cast from his face," requesting Mr. Longacre at the same time to recall the proportions of Houdon's work, as a test of the correctness of the head then before him. Mr. Longacre in speaking of the fact of the cast being taken and of its confirmation during a visit to Mount Vernon, by Mrs. Washington (mother of the proprietor of the estate), expressed his opinion of the vast importance it necessarily attaches to the fidelity of the bust by Houdon,

and establishes the propriety of regarding it as the standard from which subsequent representations of the original in statuary or bas-relief should be taken."

He further states than when a fine copy of the bust from Canova's statue of Washington, then at Raleigh, North Carolina, was shown General Lafayette, in his presence at Philadelphia, Lafayette remarked, "That as far as concerned a likeness of Washington, if it were not for the name, it might as well be anybody's else." While of Houdon's statue in the State Capitol at Richmond, to the State Librarian he pronounced it "a *fac-simile* of Washington's person." Numerous coins, medals and medallets of Washington, bearing his effigy, were struck before the year 1796, and many representations of him were made by sculptors and painters, each differing from the other, and all claiming to be true likenesses. Of these the portraits of Peale and Trumbull were the most popular, until the execution of the two celebrated portraits of Washington by Gilbert Stuart, the last receiving the finishing touches in 1796, about the time of the reception at Richmond of the Houdon statue. Authors, artists, and critics united in pæans to these famous portraits of Stuart, claiming for them, not only excellence as works of arts, but superiority as similitudes of Washington and, by prefixing them to their works, popularized them as the true likeness. Such was their reputation that Heath, of London, copied them as the best likeness of the original, and, by the multiplication of his copies, familiarized Europe with the head and face of Washington, as delineated by Stuart. It seems almost incredible, that nearly thirty years should have elapsed after the completion of the Houdon statue before its true character was understood; and that ideality should have been predicated of a statue distinguished by so many proofs of an imitation of nature is intelligible only on the hypothesis that its history was not thoroughly known.

Justice, although tardy, will not forget that Stuart, while justly proud of his own work, rejected honors not his own, and taking the chaplet due to another, which partial friends had bound around his brow, placed it on the head of Houdon.

The magnanimous and just declaration of Gilbert Stuart, the rival of all artists, as to the true delineation of Washington, that the Houdon bust is par excellence the true likeness, so graphically related by Mr. Longacre, should be accepted by the most skeptical, as conclusive evidence of the superiority of this statue as a likeness over all other delineations of Washington. The commemorative medal, belonging as it does to a most valuable and interesting department of history and art, deposited in the cabinet of medals at the National Capitol, and accessible to the curious, will indicate by comparison similitude in all of its gradations to the perfect likeness. Art will now have its recognized standard, and history its authenticated and unquestioned record; and science may approach this statue as it did the living man, to enquire the form and measurements of the person which manifested such intellectual and moral phenomena, and the relations of material shape to a character which has no parallel in history. The world is much indebted to Mr. Snowden, director of the mint, and to Mr. Longacre, so eminent for critical skill in this department of art, and to Mr. Lossing for their vindication of the Houdon statue, as the only exact likeness of Washington.

No American work has contributed more to popularize the Stuart head as the standard likeness of Washington, than Irving's Life of that illustrious man, and this clearly contrary to the text and purpose of the author who singled out from the numerous effigies of Washington the statue by Houdon, as the only one worthy of mention, yet the publishers of that distinguished work, under the sanction of names

eminent in art and letters, have thought proper to present in their appendices other portraits than that of Houdon as the standard likeness.

Irving's Life of Washington unites the accessory aids of illustration and adornment; these are not only legitimate, but commendable, save when they impress the world with error as to the character or person of Washington. An edition of this work, surpassing in magnificence any American biography, has been recently published, in which the wrong to the Houdon statue, pointed out by Mr. Longacre, is perpetuated. In such a work, the ideal and beautiful overrule, "realistic delineation, and the truth of history," and Art and Letters in their highest seats delude instead of indicating the exact likeness..

When it is observed in the learned and comprehensive work of Lübke, probably the most influential and authoritative of all the modern works on sculpture, that while the name of Houdon is mentioned, with marked distinction, the statue of Washington is entirely omitted, we cannot fail to trace the effect of the neglect and injustice of American authors, artists, critics and publishers, in relation to this statue.

Virginia recognizes her obligation to furnish to the world the evidence at her command that this statue is the only exact representation of the person of Washington which exists, and therefore the only standard likeness; and that as a work of art, its excellence proves that it was wrought by the hand of a master whose name is worthy of a high place on the roll of sculptors, and the statue, a distinguished place in the temple of plastic art.

While this statue derives its chief interest from its similitude to Washington, as a work of art it is of the highest order, and its growing fame is destined to make the city which contains it the Cnidos of the World.

We are told by Pliny that the Cnidian Aphrodite was the most beautiful of all the works of art which the world then contained, and that after its victory over its rival and twin sister long pilgrimages were made to see it, and that it was so much the pride of the Cnidians that when king Nicomedus offered to pay off the heavy debt of their city, as its price, they rejected his offer, and determined to bear their heavy burthen, rather than part with the work which was at once their glory and fame. Overwhelmed and oppressed as Virginia is by debt and poverty, if some Nicomedus should insult her with this offer, her reply would be, that although poor, the jewel does not sparkle in the sun, nor lie buried in the earth, which can buy this statue of Washington.

Our country regards the name and fame of Washington as national property. Virginia claims a special share in this heritage; but the world asserts the right to pay homage and honor to this, the greatest of all earthly names. One of the most eminent of statesmen and philosophers of another land, the late Lord Brougham, has declared, "It will be the duty of the historian and sage of all nations to let no occasion pass of commemorating this illustrious man, and until time shall be no more, will a test of the progress which our race has made in wisdom and virtue be derived from the veneration paid to the immortal name of Washington."

Gratitude and affection prompted Virginia to erect this statue as a perfect likeness of the original, and place it in her new temple of freedom. It is now and will be yet more the object of affection and interest with the wise and good of all nationalties, and its preservation, until "time shall be no more," is a sacred duty which its priceless value imposes.

APPENDIX.

A

Houdon, Jean Antoine, born at Versailles, March 20th, 1741, died at Paris, July 15th, 1828; gained the first prize for sculpture in the Royal Academy at Paris; passed ten years at Rome in the study of the antique, and returned to Paris, where he attained the front rank of French sculptors; and was admitted to the Academy. The numerous works of this artist attest his genius and wonderful skill, and established for him as a statuary a reputation surpassing all others of his time. Mr. Jefferson says, that he was employed throughout Europe (in this department of art), in all that was "capital," that he was acknowledged to be without a rival, and was thus clearly designated as most worthy to delineate the person of Washington. His thorough knowledge of the proportions of the human figure is indicated in his numerous works; his genius in works purely ideal; his intimate knowledge of anatomy in skinless figures, displaying the muscles and other parts of the external figure with perfect accuracy, one of which was designed especially for Virginia, but being detained in Philadelphia never reached its destination.

The celebrated contest between Appelles and Protogenes, in which the art of the former was detected in a single line, drawn in the absence of Protogenes, on a panel for painting which hung in his studio, and the final victory of Appelles, by dividing the line by one so attenuated that it seemed to lie on the boundary between the seen and the unseen, so marked the hand of a great master, that historians tell us the panel containing these simple lines "was preserved and carried to Rome, where it remained, exciting more wonder than all the other works of art in the Palace of the Cæsars, till it was destroyed by fire with that building." But if the lines of Appelles denote so much of skill as to have made the panel on which they were drawn historic, the skinless figures of Houdon much more attest the height of his skill, in the art of delineation. That so remarkable a work as the skinless statue, intended for Virginia, should be lost to that State is to be lamented. As a work of art it would be highly prized, but yet more for the evidence it furnished of Houdon's minute knowledge of the human frame, and his wonderful skill in the art of drawing. Fortunately two skinless figures wrought by Houdon are preserved in the Academy at Paris.

That Houdon was the greatest portrait sculptor of his age, his fame and numerous works attest, and if equaled by any in genius for the creative and ideal, like Appelles he surpassed all his contemporaries and successors in the imitative art, without which he could never have accomplished his statue of Washington.

It may be safely assumed that the future fame of Houdon will depend more on the statue of Washington than on any other work of his hands, and were this his only work would secure to his name a high place on the roll of art. But Virginia is not merely interested in the fame of Houdon as an artist, but must ever feel that he never received the pecuniary compensation for this statue which he both deserved and expected. Congress, at the instance of Arthur Lee and Theo. Bland, two of her delegates in Congress, having in the year 1783, decreed an equestrian statue to General Washington, Mr. Jefferson, in all sincerity, held out to Houdon, as an inducement to

make the pedestrian statue, the certainty of his employment to make the equestrian statue; without this inducement, he would not have undertaken the pedestrian statue. *(See letter * from Houdon dated September 8th, 1796. The contract, to make the statue, between Mr. Jefferson and himself was entered into July 8th, 1785. Houdon says that at the end of 1792, he received 9000 livres, completing the whole sum due to him, if it had not been in assignats, which reduced its value to 5,625 of silver, leaving a balance of 3,375 livres due.

B

Sparks says, "It was the intention that the statue should bear an exact resemblance to the original. The statue is a precise copy of the model, and is undoubtedly the best copy of the original that exists. The best casts from Houdon's bust are from Deville of London. The statue has always been considered as exhibiting a remarkable resemblance to the original. Houdon came to America for the express purpose of taking an exact cast of General Washington's features and persons."—Vols. I and IX.

Lossing in his Home of Washington says that, "The only method by which a perfect likeness of the great patriot might be secured was to have the artist make a model from the living face, and Messrs. Franklin and Jefferson accordingly engaged Houdon, a portrait sculptor then without a rival in the world, to go to America for the purpose."

C

"Shipped in good order, by Ve Homberg & Homberg Freres, in and upon the ship called the "Planter," whereof is master, for this present voyage, Ayres Stockley, now in the harbour of Havre-de-grace, bound for Philadelphia, to say,

"For account and risk of the Governor and Council of the town of Richmond, State of Virginia"

"Three cases, one of which contains the marble pedester statue of General Washington, and the two others contain the marble pedestal of said statue, weighing together thirty-six thousand pounds, weight going for eighteen tons, being marked and numbered as in the margin, and to be delivered, in like good order, at the aforesaid port of Philadelphia, (the danger of the seas only excepted) unto the order of Mr. William Pennock, of Norfolk, Virginia, who is to convey the same to said Governor and Council of Richmond, or to his order or assigns, he or they paying freight for the said goods. AYRES STOCKLEY.

Dated in Havre-de-grace, January 25th, 1796—(See bill of lading, in archives, Executive Department, and will appear in calendar by Dr. Palmer.)

April 10th, 1796, Letter from Mr. Pennock, to Governor Brooke, enclosing the foregoing bill of lading, (Archives Executive Department, and will appear in calendar by Dr. Palmer.)

The following facts, in connection with the transportation and erection of the statue, are not without interest:

1796.
May 10th.

To EDMUND POTTER.

For freight on General Washington's statue from Philadelphia, and three days' demurrage.....£43 4s.

* See letter in Virginia Archives, and will be found in the Calendar now being prepared by Dr Palmer.

To Col. Goode.

For erecting the statue of General Washington in the quadrangle of the Capitol..... $40 00

May 21st.

To Geo. Nicholson.

For cordage, rope and blocks for erecting General Washington's statue...£26 6s. 10d.

June 28th.

Account of Col. Goode of expenses incurred in erecting the statue of General Washington, including an allowance to Hodgson, the undertaker, of..... $50 00

1796.

July 11th.

Draft of William Pennock for freight and expenses of General Washington's statue from France to Philadelphia, amounting to.....$315 28

[See Executive Journal of the period].

D

Weld, a distinguished traveller, who was in Richmond in the month of May, 1796, informs us, that the Statue of Washington, arrived in Richmond during his visit to that place. Official papers confirm this statement and attest the erection of the statue on the fourteenth day of May, 1796. (Archives in Executive Department.)

E

The height of the statue as measured on the occasion of its recent removal was found to be six feet two inches, and comports with the received opinion of its height; but with more accurate instruments than were used on this occasion, some variation may be found from the result above stated. The statue is the size and height of life, as Washington appeared in the costume in which he is delineated; and while Houdon's measurement was mathematically exact, it is believed that no record of it is preserved.

Major Lewis, a relative of Washington, states that Washington informed him that, in his best days, when standing in ordinary shoes, his height was six feet, two inches; and Mr. Custis informs us that measured by the standard after death, his height was found to be exactly six feet.

A mathematical measurement of the statue, deducting the thickness of the shoes, will give, with absolute exactness, the height of Washington in nudity. See on this subject Mr. Jefferson's letter to Mr. Parker in his writings, Vol. IV, page 311.

F

The committee appointed to present this address to General Washington consisted of Messrs. Jones, Brent, Grayson, Henderson, and West, who discharged this duty at Mount Vernon on the 15th day of July, 1784. The error of ascribing to Mr. Madison the presentation of this address arose, no doubt, from the belief that he was on this committee. Neither Mr. Madison nor Mr. Rives makes mention of his presence on this occasion, and the correspondence of the former about this period, negatives the statement.

G

In Congress on the 7th of August, 1788, on motion of Mr. A. Lee, seconded by Mr. Bland,

Resolved, unanimously, that an equestrian statue of General Washington be erected at the place where the residence of Congress shall be established.

A committee, consisting of Mr. A. Lee, Mr. Ellsworth, and Mr. Mifflin, were appointed to prepare a plan of the equestrian statute of General Washington. In conformity with their report, it was

Resolved, That the statue be of bronze. The General to be represented in a Roman dress, holding a truncheon in his right hand, and his head encircled with a laurel wreath. To be represented on the pedestal in basso relievo, the evacuation of Boston; capture of the Hessians at Trenton; the battle of Princeton; the action of Monmouth, and the surrender of Yorktown. On the upper part of the front of the pedestal to be engraved: "The United States in Congress assembled ordered this statue to be erected in the year 1783, in honor of George Washington, the illustrious Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States of America, during the war which vindicated and secured their liberty, sovereignty, and independence." That the statue be executed by the best artist in Europe, and that the best resemblance of General Washington that can be procured be transmitted to the Minister of the United States at the Court of Versailles, for the purpose of having the above statue erected.

It will not escape notice that these resolutions were moved and seconded by Virginians, and that while Congress failed to execute their solemn decree, Virginia, with a promptitude which equalled her patriotism, proceeded to accomplish the purpose so dear to her of obtaining a statue of Washington.

The costume and devices proposed for the equestrian statue are interesting in comparison with those of the Houdon statue, and serve to illustrate the eminent fitness of the latter.

H

The recent removal of the statue from its pedestal, on account of the supposed insecurity of the floor, enabled the spectator to view it in immmediate proximity and on a level with himself. To the surprise of the observer, the delicate lines which give expression to the human face, so difficult for the pencil, and yet more for the chisel to trace, became plainly visible, and the severe dignity which distance and elevation imparted softened into the semblance of life and the highest type of manly beauty; and the eye, the impassable barrier in sculpture between nature and art, even to the most skilful artist, on a near view seemed to be endowed with vitality. We have here the key to the vivid impression, as a likeness, produced on Judge Marshall, Judge Brooke, and other distinguished friends of Washington, who familiarized themselves with the statue before it was placed on the pedestal. We here, too, find the solution of Houdon's objection to the length of the inscription, which elicited the caustic criticism of Mr. Rives in his Life and Times of Madison. Houdon knew that the least elevation of the statue and the closest proximity of the spectator would make the likeness and the artistic excellence the more palpable.

I

This truth is forcibly illustrated in regard to the potraits of Mary Queen of Scots. Historians and artists have long sought to find the true similitude of this celebrated person, of whom, although many portraits exist, it is said that no two agree, except in representing her as eminently beautiful. One biographer says: "The numerous

portraits hitherto ascribed to this princess are as various and as dissimilar as the circumstances of her life, or the features of her character;" and another says that "No strong internal presumption, no inveterate tradition tends to distinguish the authenticity of any one of them." In this state of uncertainty, one of her most distinguished biographers employed a very ingenious artist to paint that celebrated Queen, from such sketches, pictures, and other materials as might be laid before his intelligent eyes. This picture, being purely ideal, could not be an accurate likeness, and there is as little to mark the Lochleven picture, as an authentic similitude. The zeal with which a true likeness of this Queen has been sought for three hundred years of continuous search, might induce the hope that the treasure had at last been found; but her latest historian and biographer having torn the veil from her decapitated head and the plaster from her face, the question of the true likeness remains as much a matter of doubt as that of the silver-casket letters.

Few effiges, as a likeness, if any, have ever been so thoroughly authenticated as the Houdon Statue. Its muniments are complete, and as no other cast and measurement can be again taken from the life, it must ever remain without a rival, as a likeness, and constitute the only standard for future representations of the person of Washington.

J

The letters of Governor Harrison to Charles Wilson Peale, dated the 1st of July, 1784, and November the 20th, 1784—the former requesting Mr. Peale to draw a full length portrait of General Washington, and ship it to France to the address of Mr. Jefferson, and the latter thanking Mr. Peale for his prompt compliance with this request, and to Mr. Jefferson, July the 20th, 1784, and November the 12th, 1784, relative to the portrait drawn by Peale, are not only unpublished, but seem to be unknown to many, although they record the initial steps which were taken to procure the statue of Washington. In the appendix to the 5th volume of Irving's Life of Washington, it is stated that Peale's last portrait of Washington was executed in 1783, always retained by him, and sold after Peale's death as part of the Peale gallery. The portrait ordered by Governor Harrison and the correspondence in relation to it, were manifestly unknown to the author of the appendix, and other authors whose narratives required some notice of them.

This portrait—not being necessary to Houdon, as he had determined to see Washington in person, and take his cast and measurements—may not have been brought back from France. Wherever it may be, it is the property of Virginia, and as it was executed with all the skill of this eminent artist, the enquiry is natural, What has become of it? It is not improbable that by the researches of some future enquirer, not only this portrait, but the skinless figure wrought by Houdon for Virginia may be traced and discovered.

K

The influence which the cast and measurement of Washington, taken by Houdon, exerts in establishing the statue as an exact likeness of the original, imparts to the following incident much historic interest:

The late Francis T. Brooke, one of the most distinguished of the Presidents of the Court of Appeals, but having no prouder distinction than that of friend of Washington, stated, in the presence of General William H. Richardson, Adjutant General of Virginia and former Secretary of the Commonwealth, that he was present at Mount

Vernon when Houdon took his cast of Washington, and that his statue in the Capitol of Virginia is an exact likeness of Washington as he then appeared. No higher authority than that of Judge Brooke can be adduced on the question of the likeness, on account of his intimate knowledge of both the statue and the original. The Judge graphically related that when the artist was about to engage in his work, the announcement of a visitor, who had practised a fraud on Washington, caused a momentary flash of the fire of the battle field to light up his face. In allusion to which, Houdon playfully remarked "that he should have liked that the cast could have caught that heroic look;" but when the plaster was applied, faithful to nature, the expression obtained was one of dignity and repose. Many have heard this interesting narrative from Judge Brooke, a name as much the synonym of honor as his opinions are land-marks of law. This incident is a forcible illustration of the difference between the wish of the artist and the truth and fidelity of the cast. In the year 1858, the late Rembrandt Peale of Philadelphia, visited Richmond, and, after a critical examination of the Houdon Statue, pronounced it the best likeness of Washington extant. During a call at the rooms of the Virginia Historical Society, he said to Dr. William P. Palmer, who was then its Secretary, after enlargiug upon its merits, and indicating the most favorable point of view, the statue presented such an exact and perfect likeness of Washington as to recall him in memory with all the vividness of life. Mr. Peale had an intimate knowledge of the person of General Washington, and related to Dr. Palmer incidents occurring in Philadelphia, illustrative ot the manner in which he acquired this knowledge.

L

The great of antiquity demanded of those who delineated their persons and characters deification and praise. Cicero was so anxious to see himself praised that he pressed his friend, with unseemly importunity, to write his life, saying, "Let me hope if friendship should too strongly recommend my actions to your approbation, you will not reject her generous partiality, but give somewhat more to affection than rigorous truth can perhaps justly demand." And Cicero informs us that Alexander the Great would allow only Appelles to paint his picture, and Lysippus to form his statue. Appelles painted the florid Alexander hurling the thunderbolts of Jove, and darkened his complexion to suit the character of his sulphurous majesty, and Lysippus gave to Alexander's statue the proportions of Apollo. Cicero demanded to be praised; Alexander, to be made a god. Washington, on the contrary, preferred that his character should be deduced from the history of his country, and the delineation of his person drawn from nature.

The elegant folio English edition of Marshall's Life of Washington recently added to the State Library of Virginia, adorned with delineations of Washington and others so artistic as to make it a trophy of which the Library may well be proud, furnishes another illustration of the truth that when Washington is the subject, art still employs her cunning to impress the Stuart Head as the standard likeness, neutralizing, by her blandishments, the truth which history teaches.

M

No subject is more fruitful of error and misrepresentation than the effigies of the great and memorable. An illustration of this truth is found in the "Life and Times of Elkanah Watson," in which the author states that while on a visit at Mount Vernon, Washington related to him circumstances attending the taking a cast of his face by Joseph Wright, a young artist. Mr. Watson informs us that General Washington

said "that the artist oiled his features over, and, after causing him to lie on his back on a cot, proceeded to daub his face with the plaster. Whilst in this ludicrous attitude, Mrs. Washington entered the room, and involuntarily exclaimed. Her cry excited in him a disposition to smile, which gave his mouth a slight twist or compression of the lips that is now observable in the busts which Wright afterwards made." Watson adds: "These are nearly the words of Washington."

The author of the Home of Washington, describing this transaction, represents that the cast was broken in removing it from Washington's face. The inconsistency between these narratives and their omission in the prominent biographies and works which have recorded the portraits and effigies of Washington may well justify the opinion that no such scene ever occurred, and it is narrated in detail to show how easily fable becomes history. Mr. Lossing probably adopted the statement of Dunlap, which accords with his own, in representing that the cast was broken in removal from the face.

In the Recollections of Washington, by Mr. Custis, published but a few years ago, we are informed that Mr. Moreau, of New York, possesses one hundred and five delineations of Washington differing from each other, while they all bear some resemblance to the original.

The bust by Hecker, a photograph of which is in the State Library of Virginia, modeled, according to the statement of the artist, from a cast taken of the face of General Washington after death, by order of the French Government, and the delineation of his head on phrenological principles, is not only fabulous, as to the cast, but so fantastically ideal as to justify reference to it only as evidence of the tendency to create a likeness of Washington in correspondence with the ideality of the artist.

The fame of Washington growing with time will produce innumerable representations equally ideal, until the standard likeness is recognized throughout the civilized world.

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